1:Curdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

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A GROUP OF KHASI COOLIES.

Reproduced from a sketch by the late Colonel Woodthorpe, R.E.

1: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

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142 young are comely, of a buxom type, and, like the men, with highly-developed calves, the latter always being considered a beauty. The children are frequently remarkably pretty. Khasis carry very heavy burdens, it being the custom for the 482 cooly of the country to carry a maund, or 82 lbs. weight, or even more occasionally, on his back, the load being fixed by means of a cane band which is worn across the forehead; women carry almost as heavy loads as the men. The coolies, both male and female, commonly do the journey between Cherrapunji and Shillong, or between Shillong and Jowai, in one day, carrying the heavy loads above mentioned. Each of the above journeys is some thirty miles. They carry their great loads of rice and salt from Therria to Cherrapunji, an ascent of about 4,000 feet in some three to four miles, in the day. The Khasis are probably the best porters in the north of India, and have frequently been requisitioned for transport purposes on military expeditions.

157 The people are cheerful in disposition, and are light-
522 hearted by nature, and, unlike the plains people, seem to thoroughly appreciate a joke. It is pleasant to hear on the road down to Theriaghat from Cherrapunji, in the early morning the whole hillside resounding with the scraps of song and peals of laughter of the coolies, as they run nimbly down the short cuts on their way to market. The women are specially cheerful, and pass the time of day and bandy jokes with passers-
[461] by with quite an absence of reserve. The Khasis are certainly more industrious than the Assamese, are generally good-tempered, but are occasionally prone to sudden outbursts of
[533] anger, accompanied by violence. They are fond of music, and
[197] rapidly learn the hymn tunes which are taught them by the Welsh missionaries. Khasis are devoted to their offspring,
593 and the women make excellent nurses for European children,
463 frequently becoming much attached to their little charges. The people, like the Japanese, are fond of nature. A Khasi
517 loves a day out in the woods, where he thoroughly enjoys
824 himself. If he does not go out shooting or fishing, he is con-
925 tent to sit still and contemplate nature. He has a separate name for each of the commoner birds and flowers. He also has names for many butterflies and moths. These are traits which are not found usually in the people of India.

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

SECTION II.

OCCUPATION.

24/ 463 [162] THE greater proportion of the population subsists by cultivation. Cultivation of rice may be divided under two headings, high land or dry cultivation and low land or wet cultivation. The total number of persons who subsist by agriculture generally in the hills, is given in the last Census Report as 154,907, but the term agriculture includes the cultivation of the potato, the orange, betel-nut and pán. A full description of the different forms of agriculture will be given under the heading "Agriculture." 463 A considerable number of Khasis earn 482 their livelihood as porters, carrying potatoes to the markets on 439 the Sylhet side of the district, from whence the crop is conveyed by means of country boats to the different places of call of river-steamers in the Surma Valley, the steamers carrying the potatoes to Calcutta. Potatoes are also largely carried to Shillong by porters, where the tuber is readily bought by Marwari merchants, who load it in carts to be conveyed by road to Gauhati, from which station it is again shipped to 482 Calcutta and Upper Assam. Many persons are also employed in 463 carrying rice up the hill from Theria to Cherrapunji, Shillong, [466] and on to other places. Salt is also carried by porters by this route. Many Khasis, both male and female, live by daily labour in this way, earning as much as eight annas, and [462] six annas a day, respectively. The Census Report of 1901 shows some 14,000 "general labourers" in the district, the greater number of whom are porters and coolies, both male [857] and female, employed on road work and on building. In Shillong the Government Offices and the printing press give employment to a certain number of Khasis. There is also a fair demand for Khasi domestic servants, both among the Europeans and the Bengali and Assamese clerks who are employed at the headquarters of the Administration.

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

[499] this manner, the males earning on an average 8 annas and the
463 females 6 annas a day. Col. Bivar writes that in 1875 the
465 wages for ordinary male labourers were 4 to 8 annas a day, and for females 2½ to 4 annas, so that the wages rates have almost doubled in the last thirty years. Contractors, however, often manage to obtain daily labour at lower rates than those paid by
482 Government. Stonemasons and skilled labourers are able to
241 get higher rates. It is easier to obtain coolies in the Khasi than in the Jaintia Hills, where a large proportion of the popu-
461 lation is employed in cultivation. The Khasis are excellent labourers, and cheerful and willing, but they at once resent bad treatment, and are then intractable and hard to manage. Khasis are averse to working in the plains in the hot-weather months.

APICULTURE.

231 I am indebted to Mr. Rita for the following remarks on apiculture in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

There are two kinds of indigenous bees in the Khasi Hills, one domesticated, called u *ngap* (*apis Indica*), and the other u *lyuai*, which is never domesticated, and is very pugnacious; its hives are difficult of access, being always located in very high cliffs. A few hives of a third class of bee are now-a-days to be found in and around the station of Shillong, i.e. the Italian.
[177] This bee was imported into the hills by Messrs. Dobbie and Rita, and the species became propagated in the following manner. The bees had been just established in a hive, where they had constructed a brood comb, when the hive was robbed by some Khasis for the sake of the *larvæ* it contained, which they wished to consume as food; but the queen bee escaped and established other colonies, one of which was afterwards captured by Mr. Rita, the others establishing themselves at places in the neighbourhood. The hive used by the Khasis is of a very primitive description. It is usually a hollow piece of wood, about 2½ to 3 ft. in length and 10 or 12 in. in diameter. A small door is placed at each end of the log, one for the bees to go in and out, and the other for the removal of the honey when wanted. The honey-combs are broken and the honey is

I: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

shield of Cherrápunji is used as a protection from rain. Those of Maharam and Mawiang are each of a peculiar pattern. Smaller shields are used as protections from the sun or merely for show, and there are specially small sizes for children. Then there are the different kinds of basket (*ki khoh*) which are carried on the back, slung across the forehead by a cane head-strap. These, again, are of different sizes. They are, however, always of the same conical shape, being round and broad-mouthed at the top and gradually tapering to a point at the bottom. A bamboo cover is used to protect the contents of the basket from rain. There is a special kind of basket made of cane or bamboo with a cover, which is used for carrying articles on a journey. These baskets, again, are of different sizes, the largest and best that the writer has seen being manufactured at Rambrai, in the south-western portion of the hills. Paddy is husked in a wooden mortar by means of a heavy wooden pestle. These are to be seen all over the hills. The work of husking paddy is performed by the women. A bamboo sieve is sometimes used for sifting the husked rice, a winnowing fan being applied to separate the husk. The cleaned rice is exposed to the sun in a bamboo tray. Paddy is stored in a separate store-house in large circular bamboo receptacles. These hold sometimes as much as 30 maunds* of grain. Large baskets are also used for keeping paddy in. In every Khasi house is to be found the net bag which is made out of pinenapple fibre, or of a *stein*, the Assamese riha (Ilochnseria nivea). These bags are of two sizes, the larger one for keeping cowries in, the cowrie in former days having been used instead of current coin in these hills, the smaller for the ever necessary betel-nut. *Pán* leaves are kept in a bamboo tube, and tobacco leaves in a smaller one. Lime, for eating with betel-nut, is kept in a metal box, sometimes of silver, which is made in two separate parts held together by a chain. The box is called *ka shanaw*, and is used all over the hills. This box is also used for divination purposes, one end of it being held in the hand, and the other, by means of the chain, being allowed to swing

* The maund is 82 lbs.

calcaratus) and (u rymbai ktung, botanical name: glycine soja); corn (u 'rieuhadem); pineapple (u soh trun); lemons (u soh syndong); oranges (u soh niamtra); mangoes (u soh pieng); melons (u pathau); breadfruit (u soh kpu, botanical name: artocarpus incisa); Khasi cherries (u soh jong, botanical name: prunus ferrunginea); bananas (ka kait), pepper (u soh nrit); chilis (u soh syngken); papayas (u soh kynphor, botanical name: carica papaya); a kind of wild potato (u soh pyrsiu); cinnamon (ka sisia, botanical name: cinamum cassia); nutmeg (u joi phol); ginger (u 'sieng); honey in honeycombs (ka ngap). 943 438

Goats, sheep, and cattle are sold, sometimes alive, sometimes slaughtered in small quantities. There are many chickens on the market, especially for sacrificial purposes.

In addition, things are brought for sale that are necessary for the construction of houses or the cultivation of fields, such as grass for roofing huts; cut beams, bamboo poles, bamboo plaited into lattice work, dried cow manure, spades for the fields (mokhiu); Khasi knives (ka wait); [704: A/4 P.S. Schmidt-Festschrift. Photo: P. Fr. Stegmiller. Market Troupe. They go in groups for fear of murderers (thleng owners)] [704: B/2 P.S. Schmidt-Festschrift. Photo: P. Fr. Stegmiller. A woman, carrying beans, on the way to the market at Cherrapunji.] [704: C/4 P.S. Schmidt-Festschrift. Photo: P. Fr. Stegmiller. Going towards Laban to the market with potatoes. The "umbrella" is placed between the back and the burden.] [704: D/2 P.S. Schmidt-Festschrift. Photo: P. Fr. Stegmiller. On the way to Laban to the market with sugar cane.] [704: E/6 P.S. Schmidt-Festschrift. Photo: P. Fr. Stegmiller. Khasi traveling to the market in dugouts.] [Ehne photos, category 4, 11 [illegible]] [984] [982]

5:Stegmiller--6 M-4,5(no date)1926 AR7KhasiAR7

[A woman carrying bread on the way to the tombs at Cherrapunji]

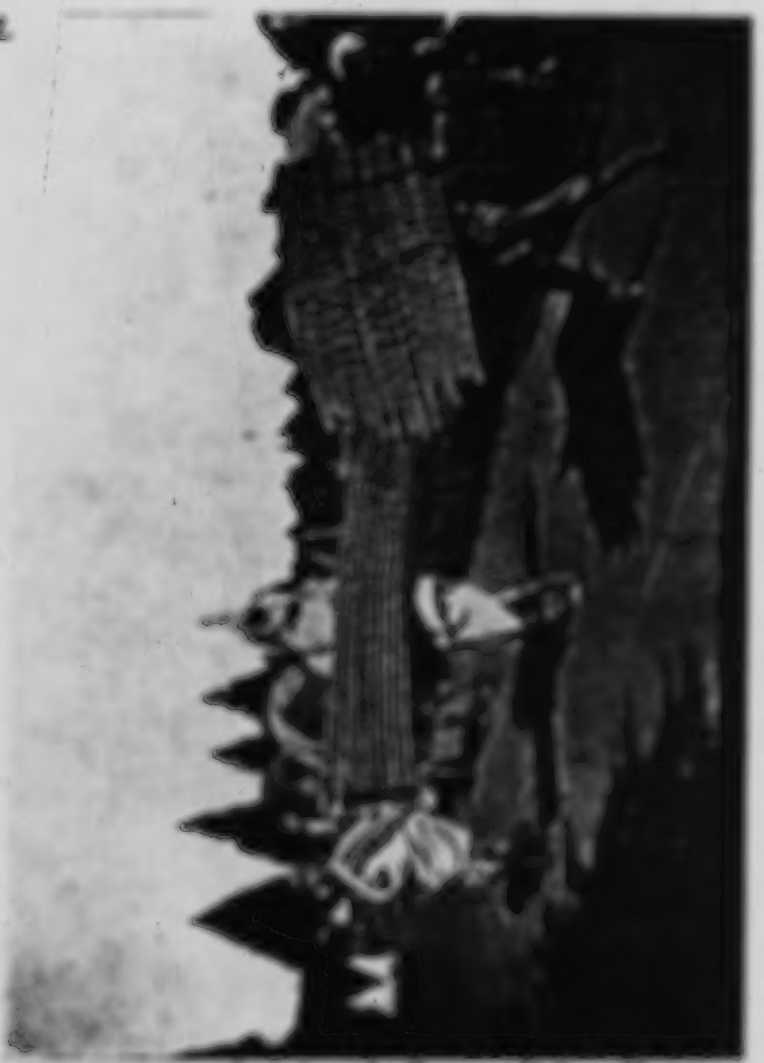
[Vol. 8]

[illegible] [illegible date] [illegible]

[Going toward Lukow to the market with potatoes.]

[Volk]

5:Stegmiller—[illegible]



[illegible]

must also be sought out and hired at the markets.

3. The Customs of the Market

a) The Preparation for Market. The sellers of both sexes normally carry their wares to the market themselves. They form smaller or larger groups and travel together. The wares are carried on their backs. The burden is packed according to its bulk or content. Larger objects, such as bamboo poles, beams, sugar cane, grass, and mats are carried without any covering by means of a forehead band plaited of reed grass (u star). Smaller items, such as salt or potatoes, are packed in sacks; others such as betel nuts, pepper leaves, fruit, vegetables, etc. are carried in baskets made of bamboo. The baskets are either pointed baskets which are round at the top or square baskets, which narrow to a point at the bottom but still are four feet long in size. The latter baskets are usually made with a cover, which, like the basket itself, is plaited and almost waterproof, so that flour or salt can be transported in them even during the rainy season. A round or oval object shaped like a shield, which in case of need is used as an umbrella (ka trap) and which is plaited out of bamboo, is inserted between the back and the burden (jingkit). On the one hand this object has the purpose of ameliorating the pressure of the burden and on the other hand it is pulled out to serve as weather to serve as an umbrella when it is held up against the rain by hand.

With regard to the weight which the Khasi carry to market, the men carry about 100 and more pounds while the women seldom

• 972 laden themselves with more than 60 to 65 pounds.

974 Many Khasi have to start during the afternoon because of the great distance to the market. They spend the night with acquaintances. In the dark [fog] they march by torch light. The torches consist of several igra, i.e., very thin bamboo tube, saturated with petroleum and lighted. Or a large bamboo tube is filled with cloth that has been saturated in petroleum. The burning torches are swung in circles while the Khasi march so that only a glow is provided, but this prevents the torches from going out. The glow is quite sufficient for giving enough light for the road (foot path).

[234] Betel nuts are chewed (a) all the way and

a. The length of the road is also measured in "betel nuts."

water pipes are smoked during the rests.

963 b) The Market Place. It is not possible
961 to talk about a definite place where the Khasi usually hold the market. This varies considerably according to the region. First of all the place chosen for the market lies outside the village. By preference they hold their markets on high ground or some such safe place. A place that has once been chosen remains the
965] market place for that particular village. The market place is often found very close to the memorial stones, just as if the spirits of the ancestors honored there should offer aid and protection to the visitors to the market. On the southern slopes of the Khasi Mountains the market is often held on the bank of a river, for the reason that the Khasi come to these markets in boats. The market place in [illegible] is quite isolated. Also the com

Fig. 1. Khasi Girls and Women with their Carrying Baskets.

15: Nakane E-9 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

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a. Khasi women at Kongthong village

b. Young Khasi women at Shella village

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19: Assam G-S (1958) 1963 AR7 Khasi AR7

CHAPTER III

The Border Area

3. 1 **Definition of Border Area.**—The term 'border areas' although very frequently used does not refer to any well demarcated area. It was, therefore, decided after a joint discussion between the Director of Statistics with the Deputy Commissioner of the district and Subdivisional Officer, Jowai, that area within 20 miles of the Indo-Pak border line would be considered as the 'border area' for the purpose of the present survey. The list of the villages falling in this area was supplied by the Deputy Commissioner and the Subdivisional Officer.

3. 2 **Condition of the Border Area before partition.**—The border area under review thus comprised of the southern slopes of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and a narrow strip of plains adjoining the southern slopes running along the Pakistan border. The area extends laterally over a length of about 120 miles, roughly from Mahashola on the west to Sonapur on the east thus covering an area of 2,400 sq. miles approximately, comprising of 454 villages inhabited by population of 74 thousands.

Barring the barren and rocky top plateaus the slopes are utilised for the production of valuable cash crops on intensive scale. These slopes provide suitable soil and climate for the production crops like arecanut, tejpatta, betelleaf, oranges, pineapples and other fruits. On account of rich yields which such plantations give to the cultivators these slopes were, more densely inhabited and intensively cultivated than would appear possible from the topography of the area. Even the most inaccessible tracts in the slopes has been converted into rich orchards, wherefrom the produce was carried by headloads over steep gradients for several miles. Due to steep gradients little other use, except some jhooming here and there, could be made of this area.

Because of the very topography, this land had its natural connections with Sylhet district now forming part of East Pakistan. From time immemorial the area had a flourishing trade with Sylhet district. It was a two-way traffic. The cash crops found eager buyers in the people of Sylhet, from whom in turn the people in the border area obtained supplies of rice, fish, vegetables and other necessities of daily life. Thus in prepartition days the existed a very prosperous and settled economy. The rich buildings in the border area villages which are now tottering away, bear eloquent testimony to the past prosperity of the border economy.

With the partition of the country in 1947, trade with the plains of Sylhet, now forming part of East Pakistan, was restricted. As a result the whole economy of this region was completely shattered and the countryside which once hummed with activity and abundance was over-shadowed with unemployment, poverty and despair. All the cash crops the mainstay of the border people lost the market in East Pakistan. For want of communication facilities the produce could not be

4.3 **Marketing.**—The Khasis and Jaintias are market minded people. Rarely they sell their produce at the farm site. They have established markets at all vantage points of the district to which they carry over miles their produce on headload for sale. On market days it is a treat to see a stream of people with headloads coming to the market up and down hills from miles away.

Markets are held usually twice in every eight days of which one is a 'Barabazar' day which is held on every eighth day and the other is a 'Chota Bazar' day which is held two days ahead of the Barabazar day. The following table shows the marketing facilities available to the rural people in the sample villages.

Table B-7 below shows the number of markets classified according to distances from the selected villages served by them and charge per maund for transport of produces from the village to these markets.

TABLE B-7

Purchase per maund from village to market	Distance from village to market				
	2 mile	Less than 5 miles	5—10 miles	Above 10 miles	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Rs.P. Rs.P.					
0·50 or less	7	..	..	..	7
0·26 „ 0·50	..	1	..	..	1
0·51 „ 0·75	1	1	..	..	2
0·76 „ 1·00	1	5	1	..	7
1·01 „ 1·25	..	6	7	..	13
1·26 „ 1·50	..	5	5	2	12
1·51 „ 1·75	..	1	..	6	7
1·76 „ 2·00	..	..	..	5	5
Above Rs 2·00	..	..	..	6	6
Total ..	9	19	13	19	60

No. of villages served by—	market	markets
1	12	6
2	7	1
3	1	
4		

19: Assa G-5 (1958) 1963 AR7 Khosl AR7

CHAPTER--X

Summary of main findings

10.1. Twenty-eight villages were selected for the purpose of the survey. Out of these 18 villages selected, 10 from Border area and 8 from Project area were selected purposively while the remaining 10 were selected at random from the entire district which is referred hereafter as general area.

Migration from big villages was rare but some migration was reported in respect of small villages.

Occurrence of Malaria, influenza and dysentery is a regular phenomenon in the area. Medical facilities were not found satisfactory and as much as 78 per cent of the villages have no dispensary within a radius of six miles. In regard to education, the facilities cannot also be said to be unsatisfactory for more than 60 per cent of the villages have a lower Primary School. Transport facilities were also unsatisfactory and as much as 56 per cent of the villages still depend upon primitive mode of transport, namely head load. Correlated with unsatisfactory type of transport, is the prevalence of unduly high cost of transport.

10.2. The number of the families covered by the survey was 1006 in the Border area, and 947 in the Project area and 104 in the General area. The average size of a village in the respective area is 1006, 80 and 104 families. In the Border and Project areas females out numbr males being respectively 1076 and 1082 females per 1,000 males as gainst 940 females per 1,000 males in the general area. Literacy is high as 24 per cent in the border area and 21 per cent in the Project area but as low as 17 per cent in the general area. In all the areas literacy among females is very low.

The working population (earners and earning dependents) is as high as 53 per cent in the Border area, 54 per cent in the Project area and 60 per cent in the general area. While there were no cases of unemployment in the Project or General area, 18 persons were reported unemployed from border area.

10.3. 1 per cent of the families in Border area are wholly agriculturel, 38 per cent partly agricultural and 56 per cent independent of agriculture. The corresponding figures for the Project area are 61, 34 and 5 per cent respectively while for the General area they are 90 per cent, 10 per cent and 0 per cent respectively.

Predominantly agricultural families constitute 61, 98 and 90 per cent of the families in Border, Project and General areas respectively.

10.4. 31 per cent of the families in Border area, 19 per cent in Project area and 10 per cent in General area were absolutely without any land while 25 per cent, 30 per cent and 24 per cent of the families in the respective areas possessed small holding ranging from 0.24 to 2.50 acres representing 11,26 and 26 per cent of the total holding area in the respective areas. 34 per cent of the families in Border and Project area and 41 in General area possessed medium sized holding (3 to less than 10 acres)